(b) if so, the details thereof and by when this waiting list is expected to be cleared;

(c) the total number of LPG connections sanctioned in Rajasthan, the total monthly supply of LPG cylinders; and

(d) how this shortage is to be met?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) The enrolment of new LPG customers and release of new LPG connections is a continuous process. Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that at present, new LPG connections are available across the counter for genuine domestic customers on verification of documents as per laid down procedure. OMCs have reported that as on 1.2.2008, they were serving 40.8 lakh LPG customers in the State of Rajasthan.

OMCs have further reported that as on 1.2.2008 they have released 2.3 lakh new LPG connectios in the State of Rajasthan during the period from April, 2007—January, 2008 as against 1.8 lakh connections during the corresponding period of last year. OMCs have not reported any waiting list pending with them for release of new domestic LPG connections in the State of Rajasthan as on 1.2.2008.

OMCs have also reported that they have supplied 364.59 thousand metric tonnes of LPG in the State of Rajasthan during the period April, 2007—January, 2008.

Hike in Price of petrol and kerosene

586. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:
SHRI S. ANBALAGAN:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has increased the rates of petrol and diesel recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the comparative details of price hike in petrol and kerosene during the last three years; and

(d) the steps Government would like to take to protect the interests of common man?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The international prices of crude oil and petroleum products have remained high and volatile. In April 2007, the Indian basket was priced at $ 65.5 per barrel, which rose to $ 89.5 per barrel in January 2008 and is currently at its highest level of $ 96 per barrel (on 27.2.2008). As passing on the entire impact of the steep increase in the oil prices to the consumers would have resulted in hardship to the common man, the retail selling prices of sensitive petroleum products namely petrol, diesel, PDS kerosene and domestic LPG have not been increased in tandem with the international oil prices. The Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are, as such, incurring under-recoveries on domestic sale of these sensitive petroleum products. To deal with the steep escalation in international oil prices, the Government has adopted the principle of

equitable burden sharing between the Government, the oil PSUs and consumers to protect the interests of common man, vulnerable sections of society and also the financial health of OMCs.

In this context, the Government has made a marginal increase in petrol and diesel prices by Rs. 2/litre and Re. 1/litre respectively with effect from 15.2.2008, which is actually in the nature of a restoration of retail prices to the price level operating before February, 2007. The Government has issued Oil Bonds and the upstream oil companies have also contributed by offering discount on crude oil and petroleum products to partially compensate the under-recoveries of OMCs. The details of price hike of petrol (at Delhi) during the last three years are given below:

Date	Petrol Rs/Ltr.
01.04.05 (VAT implemented at Delhi)	37.99
21.06.05	40.49
07.09.05	43.49
06.06.06	47.51
21.06.06 (reduction in VAT rate)	46.85
30.11.06	44.85
16.02.07	42.85
06.06.07 (tax rebate on VAT for petrol and diesel withdrawn)	43.52
15.02.08	45.52

Despite the steep increases in international oil prices, the Government has not increased the prices of PDS Kerosene during the last six years. The Government is closely monitoring the international oil prices and will continue to protect the interests of consumers.

Price of petro-products

†587. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that oil producing companies are maintaining pressure to raise the prices of petrol, diesel and gas due to continuous rise in prices of crude oil in international market;

(b) the instances and amount during past three years when the prices of petrol, diesel and gas where hiked consequently alongwith reduction in subsidy;

(c) the extent to which the loss to be measured by these companies would be reduced as a result of depreciation of dollar; and

(d) the loss which is proposed to be reduced by making the import of crude oil stable on reducing it and by mixing the ethanol with petrol and diesel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTERY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) The international prices of crude oil and petroleum products have remained high and volatile. In 2005-06 the averaged Indian basket of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.